



# THE DEPOT MUSEUM

## & HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AVON PARK

### "Your Ticket to the Past"

July 2023 Edition

## ❖ FUNDRAISING EFFORT CONTINUES ❖



Five months ago, the crew from Souther Signs installed our billboard that is keeping our city apprized of our fundraising efforts. The sign was designed by Tyler (shown on the right), and donated by Mike Souther, owner of the company. This was our first in-kind donation and now we are very happy to report that Cool & Cobb Engineering, GeoDev Financial Services, Suzanne & Keith Hunnicut and Sedlock

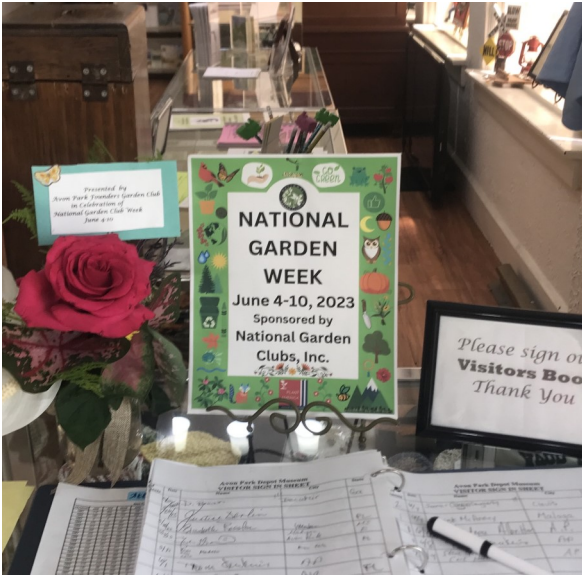
& Heston Construction have donated their expertise to help us meet our match for the grant from the Florida Humanities Division of Arts and Culture. The bulk of the match (\$160,000 in cash) has come from 124 donors. **Thank you, Avon Park!!**

We met the grant application deadline and now our application will be evaluated by a grants committee. The fund-raising continues. Our base runner is approaching 2nd base (250K). Our goal of \$500K will ensure that we will be able to install appropriate cabinetry and mount state-of-the-art



exhibits to display the memorabilia that will allow the history of Avon Park baseball to come alive. **Be a part of this exciting project. Donation envelopes are available at the Depot Museum and donations may be sent to GeoDev Financial Services at 702 W. Main Street, Avon Park.**

# ❖ MUSEUM HAPPENINGS ❖



The Founders Garden Club celebrated National Garden Week by placing floral arrangements in public places along with program information for their club. Guests to our Museum were greeted by the lovely flowers as they signed into our guest book upon entering the Museum. We thank the Club for including us in their celebration, but even more importantly, we thank their members for their dedication to our landscaping. The first Saturday of most months they can be seen weeding, planting and handling gardening chores at the Museum. Their handi-work can also be appreciated at Christmas time when they decorate City Hall.

## ❖ RESEARCH ACTIVITY ❖

Museum archives are a resource for the public. This is a recent request that we are unable to fulfill. It is reprinted here in hopes that an answer can be found by one of our members.

*"I am looking for a photo of the **BlueBonnet** restaurant. It was along Hwy 27 across from where the Olympic Restaurant is now. At that time, the Olympic was the Starlight Truck Stop. My grandparents operated the **BlueBonnet** during World War II. They were George & May Wingate. They later turned it into a little neighborhood convenience store. I would love to find a photo or someone who knew them." Signed, Tealy Wingate Eddy*

Please contact us at the Historical Society (863-453-3525) if you can help with this request.

## NEW ACQUISITIONS

The Maxwell Family recently donated an office desk that was made for the builders of the Hotel Jacaranda by the Stowe-Davis Company in Michigan. There were only six of these beautiful desks made.



A video demonstrating the use of the bread maker that is part of the Brown & Serve Rolls exhibit.

**Exhibits are changed out from time to time.**

**Stop by to see what is new!**



# ❖ UP-COMING PROGRAMMING ❖

Florida Humanities **Florida Talks** program is now available year round. Our Historical Society is again partnering with the Heartland Cultural Alliance to present speakers beginning in August. The talks will be held in the Avon Park Community Center and are being offered to the community at no charge.

**August 27, 2023 CYNTHIA BARNET, Environmental Author and Journalist, will present**



## Rain: A History for Stormy Times

Water defines Florida and Floridians. Amid pollution half a century ago, the US and Florida passed bedrock water legislation with the Clean Water Act and the state's sweeping water and land laws of 1972, some of the strongest in the country. On the 50th anniversary of these laws, Florida's waters face new challenges, from increasing algae blooms to warming and rising seas. The presentation reflects on water as Florida's defining element and how citizens can come together to protect a vital resource.

**September 23 - CARRIE SUE AYVAR returns Stories of Florida—Con Sabor!**

*In honor of Hispanic Heritage Month* Florida stories have never been the same since Ponce de Leon first arrived in 1513. Flowing seamlessly between Spanish and English, this presentation connects personal, historical, and traditional Florida tales with the history, people, and cultures of Florida, con un poco sabor Latino—with a bit of Latino flavor!



**October 22 — CAREN NEILE, Educator and Storyteller, will present Florida**



## Lore, Only in Florida: Our Stories, Our Selves

If you are a human, you have a story to tell. This one-of-a-kind presentation, based on Dr. Neile's public radio segment and book *Only in Florida: Why Did the Manatee Cross the Road and Other True Tales*, discusses true, quintessentially Florida stories and why these stories matter. A guide to identifying and sharing personal stories will be included in this engaging and educational presentation.

# FLORIDA LORE

## Avon Park ATHLETES In The News



The College World Series is a very big deal. This year The Florida Gators made it to the finals in exciting wins each determined by just 1 run. The starting shortstop for the Gators is a former Red Devil, Josh Rivera (shown here when he participated in the Perfect Game program in 2019). His home run hitting and stellar defensive play were contributing factors in getting the Gators to the finals. In the best two out of three series to vie for the College World Series Championship, their 24—4 win over LSU in the second game was very exciting. Unfortunately for the Gators, LSU came back the next day to take the title.



At the high school level, 2023 graduate Red Devil Jalan Gordon (second cousin to Thomas “Flash” Gordon) is another alumnus of the Perfect Game program. During his senior year, Jalan improved his overall ranking in the state by 74 points. His “lightning” speed made stealing bases look easy and he was a pitcher’s nightmare when it came to his ability to hit homeruns.

**Congratulations, Jalan !! Well done.**

Another multi-talented athlete for the Red Devils is Jack Barben. He was named Male Athlete of the Year for Avon Park High School. Good luck in your college pursuits !!



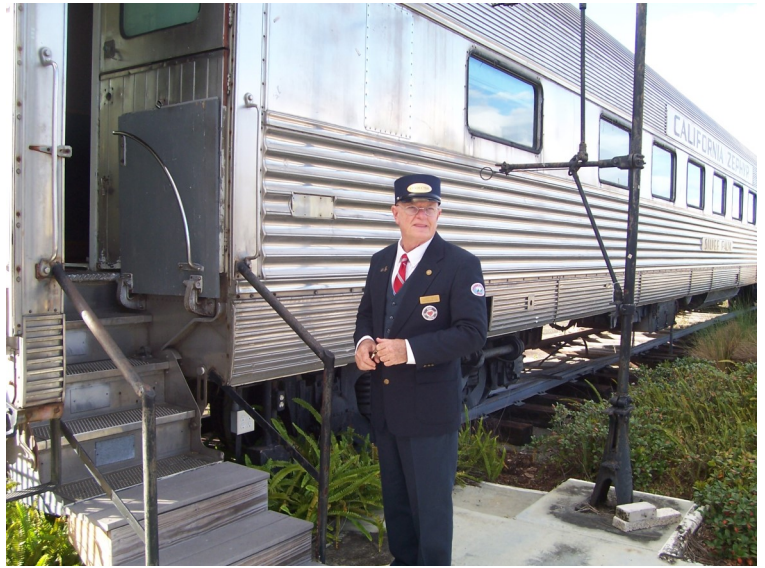
The Dixie Youth Baseball District II 2023 State Tournament was played at the Durrah Martin Baseball Complex this past weekend. Families from up and down the state were here in Avon Park and were able to enjoy quality championship youth baseball. The Avon Park teams did us proud!!



# CONDUCTOR RETIRES

*by Elaine Levey*

James “Jim” Deal, has been an outstanding museum docent for more than 20 years serving as our photographer, videographer, researcher, website manager, and server (Dining Car) and now he has decided to retire. After serving 40 years as a medical lab technician, Jim came to the museum to volunteer. He said he enjoyed every aspect of those years at the museum. “Giving guided tours for luncheon guests, kids and adults was a big part of it”, he said. At one time he dressed as a Seaboard conductor. He loved taking pictures of the visiting groups and they can be seen on the giant TV that he donated that also shows our old black and white photos. He had a strong interest in



Avon Park’s history and was always eager to learn more.

There were times after giving a tour when he made his way into the Dining Car to don a white chefs’ jacket to serve the dining guests. Following the luncheon, he would be outside arranging a group photo session for a memory photo for the guests.

He thought it would be such a treat for guests to see a close up view of Amtrak’s Silver Star and Silver Meteor passing. He would check the “status” of the train and then he could determine its arrival in Avon Park. He

preferred to have the guests on the ramp for viewing. He found that everyone loves seeing the train. Even the train engineer got in on the act with several blasts of the horn for the enthusiastic and excited crowd waving, as the train passed. Jim added so much to our museum and we are forever grateful. He is truly missed.



**Honor students from South Florida State College have volunteered as servers in the dining car. The three shown here with Jim served in 2014 under his supervision.**

**This handsome, happy quartet made dining with us a pleasant experience.**

## THANK YOU

Volunteers provide valuable services to the Museum. Based on the federal government hourly rate for volunteers, it would cost the Historical Society over \$75, 000 if we had to pay for all of the services provided by volunteers. As an example, recently, Michael Miller was visiting his Mom here in Avon Park and spent a day consolidating our computer connections and making our computers and printers more efficient. Thank you, Michael. Your willingness to share your expertise is very much appreciated.

A rough calculation of the time spent giving tours, gardening, preparing and serving luncheons, making routine repairs, attending board meetings and carrying out other countless tasks that are needed to maintain our museum comes to at least 4,000 volunteer hours each year.

Your membership dues helps to keep the doors open, and the next most valuable thing some of our members contribute is their time.

## THANK YOU



*A volunteer opportunity awaits. Visit the Museum to learn how your valuable time can benefit our community*

*Enjoy a Luncheon in the Air-Conditioned comfort of our Dining Car*



*Cost - \$15. Includes a tour & a 3-course meal*

Visit our website  
[www.avonparkhistoricalsociety.com](http://www.avonparkhistoricalsociety.com)  
 or call the Depot Museum at  
 863-453-3525 for the menu  
 choices and other details



Our volunteers are waiting to serve you. (From left to right) Nancy Fisk, Madison Knowles, Kathy Morin & Jordan Montgomery. Aprons made by Marjorie Scott, Athens, Maine.

**Thank you to our Corporate members**  
**These businesses and organizations**  
**support your museum!!**

Please show your appreciation with your  
patronage when a service is needed.

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Dr.s Richard & Betsy Wood    Worden Realty

**Please consider a gift to the Historical Society**  
**in lieu of flowers to honor the passing of a loved one.**

We gratefully acknowledge The First Christian Church in Avon Park for  
generously allowing us to print our newsletters in their office.



# Historical Society of Avon Park, Inc

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Dave Sanford, Maintenance

Nancy Fisk, Newsletter Editor



## MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Deborah Crews Nancy Fisk

## MUSEUM HOURS

Wed., Thursday, & Friday

10 am to 3 pm



## CALENDAR of EVENTS

**August 27, 2023**

*Rain: A History of Stormy Times*

September 23, 2023

Honoring Hispanic Heritage

**October 22, 2023**

**Florida Talks - Florida Lore**

**Aug 5 & Sept 2**

**Gardening on the Grounds**